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American Art Journal.

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ITALIAN OPERA—OPENING NIGHT.

Mr. Maretzek's first season at the New Academy of Music commenced on Thursday evening, the 7th inst. The weather was wretched in the extreme, and the terrible state of the streets no doubt had considerable effect upon the amount of the attendance; but there was a fine audience nevertheless, and the dressing was elegant and costly. The interior modeling of the Academy is in every way superior to that of the old structure. The circle is so well designed, that from every seat in the house an unobstructed view of the stage can be obtained. Another excellent point is that all the people can be seen as well as see, an important fact when the question of dress has to be considered. The decorations are neither particularly elegant nor well executed, and the chandelier is very big and very thin, and is neither ornate nor elaborate, but looks as if it cost about two dollars and a half, which is very different from the description to be found in another part of this paper.

The acoustic properties of the house are excellent; the tone permeates clear and bright; there are no cross vibrations; the great breadth of the proscenium boxes acts as a conductor, through which the sound debouches broad and unbroken. There is plenty of space between the seats, and the alley ways are greatly enlarged. The corridors are light and cheerful, and the *entresol* is of ample dimensions without any pretence to elegance or architectural beauty. On the whole the New Academy, while it is inferior architecturally and in grandeur and richness to the old building, is vastly improved in point of comfort, seeing, hearing and being seen, and in safety from the consequences of any sudden panic or confusion.

The opera chosen for the opening was Rossini's immortal "Il Barbiere." Musically it was a fitting choice, managerially we think it was a mistake. Had "L'Africaine" been produced, we believe that, despite of the weather, the Academy would have been crowded to overflowing. The cast of "Il Barbiere" was as follows: Rosina, Miss Kellogg; Il Conte, Signor Baragli; Il Dottore, Signor Bellini; Il Barbiere, Signor Ronconi; Don Basilio, Antonucci. The performance of this opera calls for no comment upon this occasion, as we reviewed it with the same cast but a little while ago.

The opera of "Fra Diavolo" was given on Friday evening, and this morning (Saturday), the favorite opera of "La Sonnambula" will be given at the Matinee.

SOIRÉE OF CHAMBER MUSIC.

The Second Concert of Chamber Music (12th season), given by Messrs. Wm. Mason, Theo. Thomas, J. Mosenthal, G. Matzka and F. Borgner, was given at Steinway's Room on Thursday evening. There was an excellent audience assembled, considering the inclemency of the weather. The programme consisted of the following pieces: Trio, Piano, in E flat, Op. 100, Schubert; Noveletten, Piano Solo, Op. 21, Nos. 5 and 7, Schumann; Quartette, string, F. op. 59, No. 1, Beethoven.

The Trio, which is a charming composition, beautiful without great depth, and interesting from its free flow of melody, was well and effectively played throughout. The piano part was sustained by Mr. Wm. Mason with spirit, grace and accuracy. But his best performance, the best we have heard from him in several years, was that of the Noveletten by Schumann. These compositions are singularly and wonderfully beautiful. In form they are purely fanciful, in fact they are mental vagaries, but so rich in imagination, so affluent in exquisite thoughts, fragmentary jewels scattered with a lavish hand, that the mind follows every change with an eager curiosity, watching and waiting for each new development, each added beauty, that serve at once to charm the sense, and bring into relief the strong and leading thoughts. Mr. Mason's interpretation of these compositions was not only thoroughly artistic, but truly sympathetic. He entered into their subtle spirit, he humored their changes of sentiment, and he threw into them a passionate expression, and an intellectual rendering, which revealed their whole scope and meaning, and literally left nothing to be desired. It was in every respect a masterly performance, and the prolonged applause, which was really an encore, testified to the unqualified delight of his hearers. His touch, and the character of the compositions, brought out the best qualities of the fine Steinway Grand Piano upon which he played. He treated it with the tenderness and the delicacy of a true artistic instinct, and displayed its æsthetic qualities as we have rarely heard them displayed before.

The grand Beethoven Quartette in F, was an intellectual feast; it is so broad in its conception, so full of striking leading thoughts, so deep and earnest in its sentiment, and so wonderfully and powerfully worked out, that it almost bewilders the mind in the endeavor to follow out its intricacies and its surprising, but calculated effects. The first movement was finely played; every point was well brought out. The Allegretto was taken too fast, but still was well executed. The Adagio was rendered with good sentiment and expression and was artistically colored, but the last movement was in parts exceedingly scratchy and very much jumbled up. On the whole,

however, it was a delightful concert and a decided success.

THE HOME JOURNAL REJUVENATED.

In consequence of the lamented death of the two founders of the *Home Journal*, that popular and excellent paper has passed into other hands. Mr. Morris Phillips, who was for some years the business right-hand of the establishment, still retains the control, and has associated with himself two competent and capable gentlemen, both familiar to the readers of the *Home Journal*, as contributors of many of the best articles it contained. It will therefore be seen that although the paper is now in other hands, it is still in the hands of friends.

We remember a conversation we had with General George P. Morris, but a very short time before his death. We were on a visit to him at his beautiful home, Undercliff, and were discoursing of the prospects of the journals of our several friends. It was a charming scene, the grand river rolling below us and the tall mountains looking sublime in their repose, while over our heads the old trees made a cool and pleasant shade. We can see now the genial face of our friend of twenty years; it had a touch of sadness in it that day, for our conversation had touched upon the thinned ranks of the friends who had fought their way through life by our sides. Speaking of himself and Willis, in connection with the *Home Journal*, he said—"I have lived long enough, my friend, to know that a man may outlive his reputation, or rather, that a man may be dead to the public though alive, although his works may be as fresh as at the hour of their conception. We have influenced wide circles in our generation, but life to-day has a stronger, a more restless vitality, and we, the prophets of a past age, have lost the gift of prophecy. A bolder and more vigorous literature is springing up, but whether it is a better literature or not, remains to be seen, and we have not the thews and sinews, nor the mental activity to enter into the ranks of the combatants. We must retire from the field and endeavor to direct that which we cannot lead. The fact is, the *Home Journal* lacks new blood; to bring it into perfect sympathy with the new generation of readers, it needs young life, and the fresh thoughts of bold intellects, and if I live, I will draw around me the rising men of the day, and directed by the journalistic experience of myself and my dear old friend Willis, turn their minds and pens to that account, that we will re-baptize the *Home Journal* with the blood and fire of youth."

To such effect the General discoursed, and he lived long enough to carry out his far-sighted policy. The gentlemen now at the head of the paper are those that he drew